

STUDENT AFFAIRS ANNUAL REPORT

2019-2020



Student Affairs Annual Report 2019-2020

From Vice President for Student Affairs Frank Shushok Jr.

For Student Affairs, 2019-2020 was a year of change – even before the world-wide pandemic affected us all.

In fall 2019, we found ourselves in the midst of the university's largest first-year enrollment surge and the massive amount of planning and work done in bringing these students to campus. The effort Student Affairs put into expanding housing, developing new dining options, and increasing programming opportunities to serve these students was no small feat. Fall 2019 also saw the largest Corps of Cadets in over a half-century, with a total enrollment of 1,154 cadets.

In October we experienced a leadership transition, saying goodbye to Vice President for Student Affairs Patty Perillo. I was welcomed into the role on an interim basis.

Spring brought the COVID crisis to campus, affecting all Student Affairs departments, with particular challenges for the Dean of Students office, Housing and Residential Life, Schiffert Health Center, Hokie Wellness, Dining Services, and Cook Counseling Center. New Student and Family Programs and Communications collaborated to reinvent summer Orientation as a virtual event. Departments scrambled to provide students with safe options for socializing and getting involved. These challenges are ongoing.

Also in spring 2020, I was formally appointed Vice President for Student Affairs. By June, I introduced substantive changes in the Student Affairs leadership structure. These changes have allowed us to more fully integrate initiatives related to wellness, inclusion and diversity, first-generation student support, food security, interfaith programs, and *Ut Prosim* in action as major components in each of the division's 20 departments.

This is a structure for student success. Students are our priority. We measure our success by their success. Our driving narrative is 'whatever it takes' to support the individual success of every student. We will go the extra mile and take personally the success of each student we encounter, with initiatives that span individual departments and utilize the reach and talents of each of them. We will be relentless in removing unnecessary barriers and will evaluate policies and practices in light of the capacity of each to champion student success.

Simply put, we can shape the next generation of leaders and the world they create. The COVID-19 crisis may have shifted the road toward particular goals, but the goals themselves are not necessarily harder to reach. In fact, we encourage students and each other to embrace the detour. The exercise of finding the way forward may not feel easy at first, but hope is a muscle that can be stretched and strengthened.

Student Affairs is comprised of faculty; full-time staff; wage employees; graduate assistants; and student employees, leaders, and interns -- more than 3,600 people who touch nearly every aspect of our students' lives. The people of Student Affairs work together and with other university departments and centers to make the Hokie experience as personally enlightening as it is academically rewarding. Every member of Student Affairs has the knowledge and interest to make a positive difference in our students' lives. Our mission, Beyond Boundaries, Inclusive VT, the Aspirations for Student Learning, and our motto, *Ut Prosim*, remain our guiding lights towards our future.

This annual report covers Student Affairs' initiatives, programs, processes, and services during the 2019-2020 academic year. It is an occasion to reflect, celebrate successes, assess impact, and prepare for new achievements. As you read this report, I invite you to share in our collective commitment to our students, so that together we can fully realize the opportunities we can open for them.



Frank Shushok Jr.
Vice President for Student Affairs

Submitted October 1, 2020

Achievements and Outcomes

First-Generation Student Support

In its first full year of operation, the First-Generation Student Support program created many opportunities for community and connection between students, faculty, and alumni:

- In partnership with Cook Counseling Center, launched a first-generation student support group.
- The Hokies First peer mentoring program recruited 10 peer mentors to provide leadership for 85 incoming first-year students, more than twice the participant goal of 40. **[Fig. 1]**

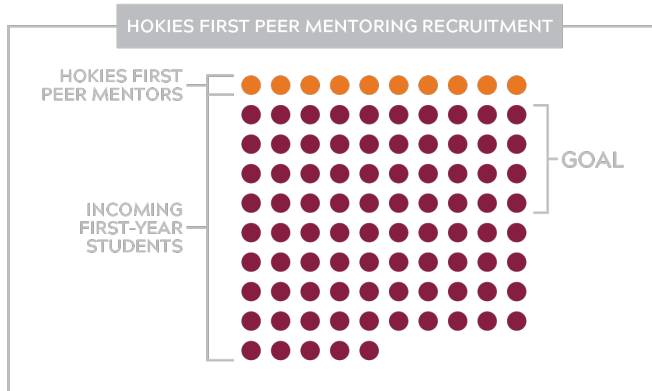


Fig. 1

- In collaboration with Career and Professional Development, a virtual first-generation alumni panel connected six alumni with 40 first-generation students and 10 first-generation faculty-staff members.
- In collaboration with Undergraduate Admissions, a virtual first-generation student panel for newly admitted first-generation students drew 154 participants who submitted questions to panelists.
- Virginia Tech was named a First-gen Forward institution by the Center for First-generation Student Success, an initiative of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators in Higher Education, and The Suder Foundation.

Well-being

Several Student Affairs units collaborated to provide wellness and well-being resources to students with significant measurable results.

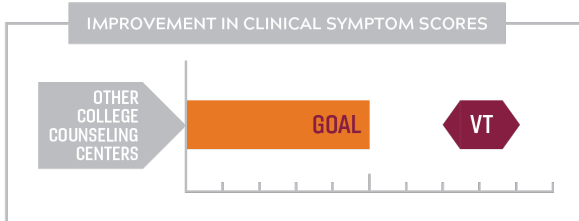


Fig. 2

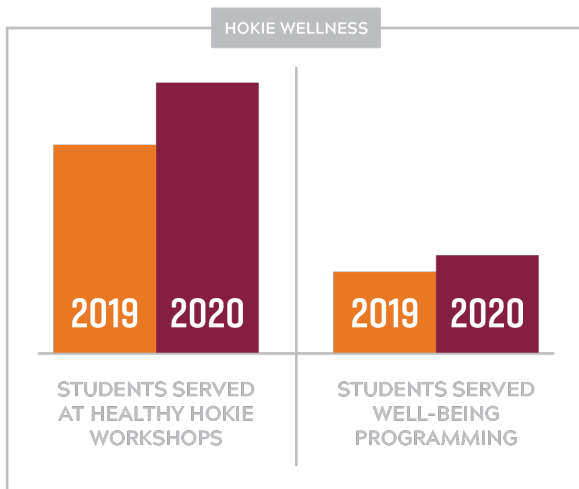


Fig. 3

- Cook Counseling Center continued to provide excellent mental health care to the community. Its goal had been to show improvement in clinical symptoms scores better than 50% of other college counseling centers. The magnitude of improvement in clinical symptoms for Cook exceeds the change seen in 70% to 91% of other counseling centers. **[Fig. 2]**
- Hokie Wellness served 10,120 students in 427 Healthy Hokie workshops, a 23% increase from the previous year. Nearly 3,660 of the 10,120 students were served in programming related to building resiliency, mental, and emotional well-being, a 17% increase over the previous year. **[Fig. 3]**
- Driven by data showing that students who regularly engage in physical activity have greater GPAs, Recreational Sports created an incentive contest to keep Hokies motivated to exercise and encourage healthy behavior. Held October 21 to 27 to coincide with the increase in students seeking counseling services, the contest led to an increase in facility swipes
- Launched Rec Sports virtual programs in spring in response to COVID-19's impact, with 14,692 participating in virtual activity options.

Food Security

VT Engage's Campus Kitchen at Virginia Tech, with partners in Dining Services, diverted 49,438 pounds of food to community food pantries in the area in 2019-2020.

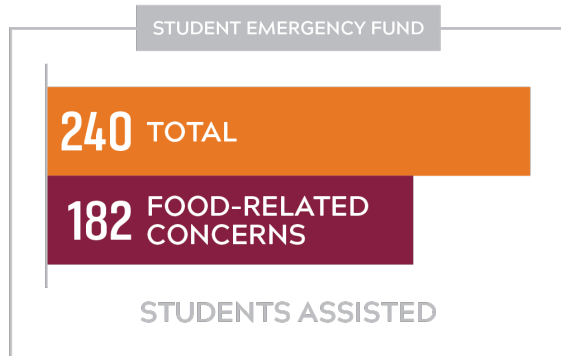


Fig. 4

- In spring and summer 2020, the Student Emergency Fund assisted 240 students, of which 182 had food-related concerns (along with other needs). **[Fig. 4]** The average for grants awarded was \$1,000.
- Information Technology collaborated with multiple stakeholders on building an online platform for ordering, fulfillment, and logistics for The Market, a new initiative of Student Affairs designed to provide food assistance to students.

Interfaith

The Interfaith program continued to offer opportunities for community and connection among students, faculty, and staff, and created spaces to consider a more inclusive world.

- In February, the Interfaith Advisory Council hosted its inaugural Interfaith Together Dinner for more than 80 students, faculty, staff, and local community members. 135 faculty and staff members and approximately 130 students participated in brown bag lunch dialogues, evening dialogues, and interfaith virtual hangouts. **[Fig. 5]** The Common Ground leadership training institute was hosted with 1 graduate and 11 undergraduate students in its inaugural cohort.
- Awarded two Campus Innovation Grants from the Interfaith Youth Core for interfaith leadership student training and a professional development series for faculty and staff.

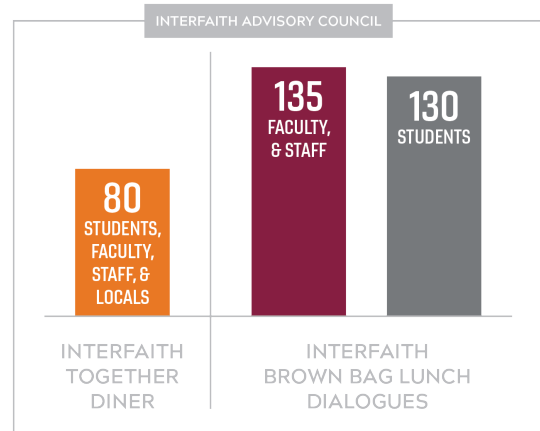


Fig. 5

Diversity and Inclusion

The establishment of a Senior Associate Dean of Students and Director for Student Affairs Inclusion and Diversity position will strengthen efforts to engage students in experiences that develop cultural competency and foster inclusion.

- The number of Cook Counseling Center of outreach events for students from underrepresented populations rose from 55 events three years ago to 126 in 2019-20, with the number of staff members offering these workshops increasing 213% from the previous year.
- In partnership with Cranwell International Center, Dining Services continued International Café Hours. The five events in 2019-2020 drew 100 to 200 attendees each, providing a venue for affiliated student organizations to showcase what is unique and meaningful about the countries and cultures they represent.
- Student Affairs Advancement, with the help of the Vice President for Student Affairs and Cranwell International Center's director, secured a \$6 million gift from the Cranwell family that will provide immediate and endowed programming support to the Cranwell International Center. **[Fig. 6]** It was the largest single gift in Student Affairs history.



Fig. 6

- Services for Students with Disabilities helped develop and implement workflows and processes with Accessible Technologies for centralized funding for captioning services across campus, providing 40,000 hours of captioning in spring 2020 and 50,000 hours in fall 2020.
- The Corps of Cadets began a multi-year effort to steadily grow enrollment to 1,400 by 2024 and match or exceed the university's diversity percentages for enrollment.

Aspirations for Student Learning

The establishment of an Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs and ExperienceVT position will further the aims of ExperienceVT, an initiative that provides students with the tools they need to make the most of their time at Virginia Tech and to understand, practice, and apply the Aspirations for Student Learning.

- Learning Partnerships, in collaboration with Student Affairs Communications and Information Technologies, launched a pilot version of the ExperienceVT web app with 600 students participating. **[Fig. 7]** Three ExperienceVT Map Conversation Guides were also created for use with different student populations.

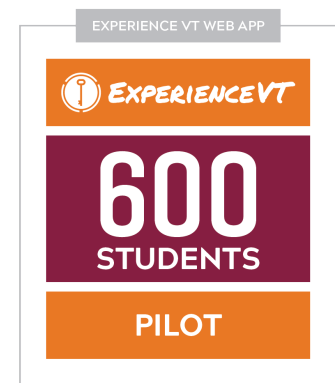


Fig. 7

Leadership and Service

Leadership opportunities transcended departmental lines to open students to new skills and perspectives.

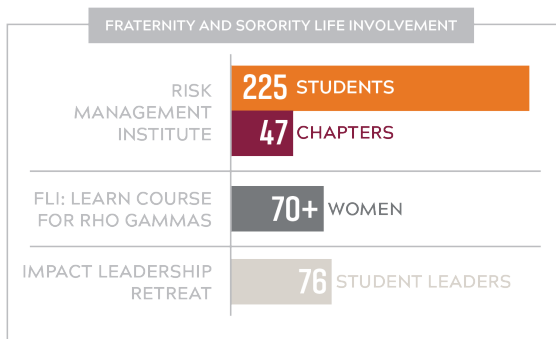


Fig. 8

- In Fraternity and Sorority Life, more than 225 student leaders attended the annual Risk Management Institute, representing all 47 chapters for the first time ever. More than 70 women participated in the 3-credit FLI: Learn course for Rho Gammas. The IMPACT leadership retreat in January was attended by 76 student leaders. **[Fig. 8]**
- As part of an increased commitment to proactive and educational engagement with students, Student Conduct partnered with Fraternity and Sorority Life to improve communication with chapters about expectations and resources, co-facilitated with Blacksburg Police a conversation on sexual violence, and worked collaboratively to develop educational sanctions.

- The I WILL (Inspiring Women in Lifelong Leadership) Institute was fully supported by VT Engage this year. As a result, 50 undergraduate and graduate students attended seven sessions, providing a welcoming space for women of all backgrounds.

Living-Learning Programs (LLPs)

As measured by the 2019 Residential Experience Survey, students participating in Living-Learning Programs are more likely to feel that their LLP helped them: feel a sense of belonging (78.87%), get involved (67.18%), succeed in coursework (61.52%), connect to resources (75.25%) -- improvement in all four categories over 2018 numbers. **[Fig. 9]** 60% of the residential population indicated that residential living has exposed them to a new idea or belief system.

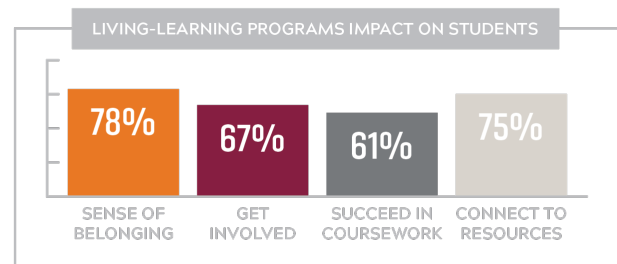


Fig. 9

Facilities and Administrative Effectiveness

Mission-centric efforts to eliminate duplication and waste while optimizing current talent and resources led to several significant savings, revenue increases, and changes in processes.

- Cranwell International Center completed the initial phase of a multi-phase transition plan for the consolidation of all support programs and immigration services to serve both undergraduate and graduate international students more effectively, efficiently, and holistically.
- With the university pivoting to an online platform, all clinical staff members at Cook Counseling Center participated in training on the delivery of effective and ethical telehealth. Student satisfaction scores were actually higher for spring semester than fall semester. Overall satisfaction rose from 82% to 91%, the likelihood of staying in school increased from 80.8% to 87%, and the willingness to return to Cook if needed increased from 91% to 94%.

[Fig. 10]

- Quick service Grab-and-Gobble offerings were expanded throughout the Dining portfolio to meet the increase in enrollment growth and shifting customer preferences. Southgate added 28 new items to its Grab-and-Gobble program, and 33,597 units were produced in FY20, equivalent to \$108,717.25 in sales.
- Information Technology created Microsoft Teams sites for all departments and began moving departmental files from SharePoint sites to Teams sites. This paid off when faced with the COVID 19 crisis, as most departments were ready to collaborate online within a few days. The use of the Teams platform has increased significantly since then and made SA staff more productive while working remotely.

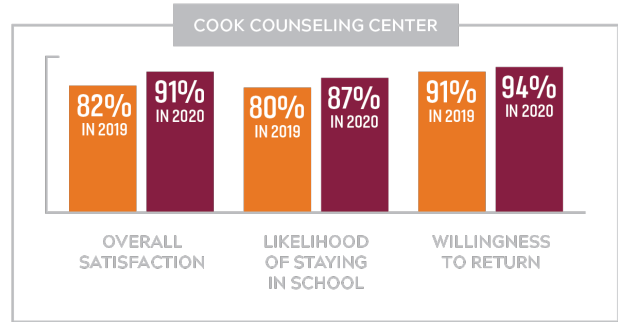


Fig. 10

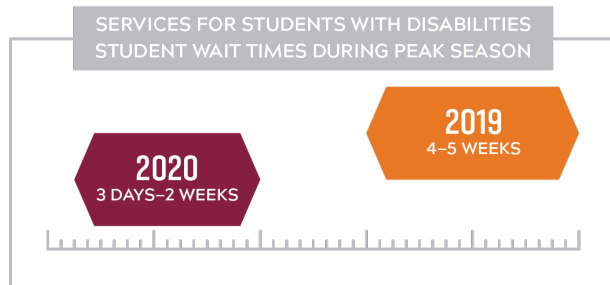


Fig. 11

- Services for Students with Disabilities reduced student waits during peak seasons from 4-5 weeks in fall 2019 to 3 days-2 weeks in spring 2020.

[Fig. 11] An expedited process for fall 2020 will further reduce students waiting to discuss their requests for equal access.

New programs and strategies

Through leadership transitions and significant organizational change, Student Affairs faculty and staff have served with commitment, patience, support, and integrity, and a mission-centered passion that has been inspiring.

With the certainty that crises open doors to new possibilities, opportunities, and transformation, at the beginning of June 2020, the Vice President for Student Affairs announced a new leadership structure – one that will champion student success, increase collaboration among departments, highlight key initiatives, emphasize collective possibility, and align our organization for the future.

This new structure values well-being as a prized outcome of attending Virginia Tech, and embraces learning as a deep privilege of our work. Key elements include:

- The establishment of a split appointment with the Vice President's Office in which Anthony Scott will serve as both Senior Associate Dean of Students and Director for Student Affairs Inclusion and Diversity. As part of Anthony's new responsibilities, he will develop a divisional strategy for strengthening efforts to engage students in programs, conversations, and experiences that develop cultural competency, foster inclusion, build bridges of understanding, and teach effective advocacy.
- Ted Faulkner has assumed the newly created position of Assistant Vice President for Dining, Housing, and Student Centers. As part of this role, Ted will share supervision for Housing and Residence Life and Student Engagement and Campus Life, providing exceptional service, facilities, and dynamic physical environments for students. This position participates in a matrix supervisory model designed to nurture seamless integration and remove artificial bureaucratic barriers.
- The dual report of Housing and Residence Life to Chris Wise, Assistant Vice President for Health and Wellness, will allow Student Affairs to embark on a re-visioning of the residential experience with an emphasis on well-being. We will integrate aspects of Cook Counseling Center, Recreational Sports, and Hokie Wellness into the residential living framework and re-imagine student leadership and professional staff roles accordingly. Because building a foundation of well-being is an important element of student success, this work has never been more important than it is today.
- One of the most exciting shifts is the establishment of an Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs and ExperienceVT who will focus broadly around our hope that every student ExperienceVT in a self-designed, intentional, and transformational way. James Bridgeforth will lead this area and serve as a catalyst for these efforts throughout Student Affairs. His responsibilities will include: Cranwell International Center, Fraternity and Sorority Life, Learning Partnerships, VT Engage: The Center for Leadership and Service Learning, and Student Engagement and Campus Life – the latter a dual report with the Assistant Vice President for Dining, Housing, and Student Centers.

We will build on the success of our Living-Learning Programs with the fall 2021 opening of the Creativity and Innovation District LLC, with Tim Baird, associate professor of geography and Senior Fellow at the Institute for Creativity, Arts, and Technology, as faculty principal. There are now 16 Living-Learning Programs at Virginia Tech – 13 living-learning communities centered on a theme or major,

and three residential colleges, each led by a live-in faculty principal: Pablo A. Tarazaga, faculty principal for the Honors Residential Commons in East Ambler Johnston, is associate professor and John R. Jones Faculty Fellow in mechanical engineering; C.L. Bohannon, faculty principal for the Leadership and Social Change Residential College, is associate professor and director of the Community Engagement Lab in Landscape Architecture; Danna Agmon, faculty principal in the Residential College at West Ambler Johnston, is associate professor of history and core faculty in ASPECT (Alliance for Social, Political, Ethical, and Cultural Thought). New LLCs for students interested in interfaith issues and for first-generation students will also be implemented in fall 2021.

Regular internal department program reviews continue to provide evaluation, data, and direction, and external reviews are conducted periodically, such as the one this spring for VTCC which involved experts in military affairs and higher education visiting campus. We will utilize the work of the various task forces -- informed by broad representation and extensive research -- to address pressing issues. The Task Force on Mental Health, the Task



Force on Food Security, the Task Force on Fraternity and Sorority Life, and the Task Force on Student Governance will provide knowledge and concrete action items that will guide us in the coming year.

We will work harder than ever to steward the resources entrusted to us by students and the Commonwealth of Virginia. We are committed to rooting out bureaucratic inefficiencies, as well as services and practices that do not strengthen the probability of student success, learning, and flourishing. The new leadership structure represents several hundred thousand dollars in reduced expenses, while also optimizing our current talent and resources.

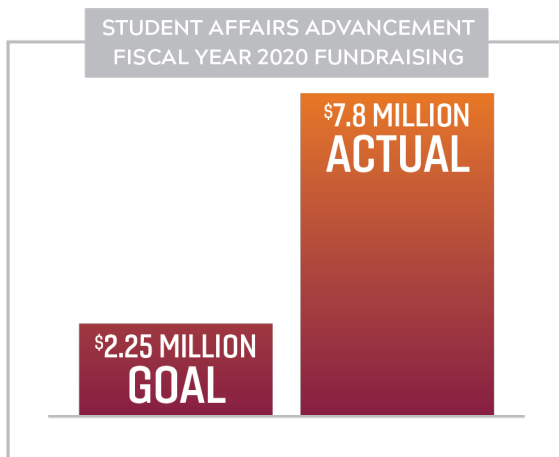


Fig. 12

In raising \$7.8 million, Student Affairs Advancement exceeded our FY20 fundraising goal of \$2.25 million by more than 300%. **[Fig. 12]** This was the largest fundraising year in Student Affairs history. We saw continued growth of gifts to the Hokie Family Annual Fund (HFAF). FY20 goal was \$250,000, a 25% increase over FY19. Despite the cancellation of Giving Day and only nine months of fundraising due to COVID-19, HFAF ended at 96% of goal and was on track to exceed goal for the second year in a row. We continue to surge closer to Student Affairs' 10-year campaign goal; at year end FY20 (3 years in), we are at 53% of our goal.